

**LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**Date of meeting 12 January 2023**

**Item No 11**

**Title: Recommendations of the Schools Block Working Group**

**Appendix A refers**

**Executive Summary**

On 6 December 2022, the Schools Block Working Group considered a number of reports, including:

- Schools Forum School Block Membership
- Schools Block Funding Arrangements 2023/24
- De-delegation Update
- School Teaching and Support Staff Supply Reimbursement Scheme (Attached)
- Ukraine Funding
- Schools in Financial Difficulty
- Clawback Exemption Request

**The Forum is asked to:**

- a) **Note the report from the Schools Block Working Group held on 6 December 2022;**
- b) **Ratify the Working Group's recommendations.**

## **Background**

On 6 December 2022, the Schools Block Working Group considered a number of reports. A summary of the information presented, and the Working Group's recommendations are provided below:

### **1. Schools Forum School Block Membership**

The report provided an update on the School Secondary School Governor's representation on the Schools Forum.

#### **The working group:**

- a) Noted the report.**
- b) Welcomed Rachel Bond as one of the formal Schools Forum representatives from November 2022.**
- c) Thanked Jackie Lord for her contribution to the work of the Forum.**

### **2. Schools Block Funding 2023/24**

On 17 November 2022, the Chancellor delivered his Autumn Statement 2022.

The statement made a number of announcements that will impact on school funding going forward.

England's core schools budget will receive an additional £2.3 billion in 2023/24 and £2.3 billion in 2024/25. In 2024/25, the core schools budget will be £58.8 billion, £2 billion more than the budget published in Spending Review 2021, after adjusting the budgets to account for the removal of compensation for employer costs from the Health and Social Care Levy.

DfE have indicated that they will confirm in due course how this funding will be allocated in 2023-24 for schools and high needs, and it is anticipated that this will be part of the annual DSG allocation announcement which are expected mid December 2022.

The schools block is ring-fenced, but the LA is permitted to transfer up to 0.5% of the schools block funding allocated to other blocks with the agreement of their Schools Forum.

A discussion was held at the School Forum meeting on 18 October 2022 to transfer £1m of DSG reserves for 2023/24 into Early Years Block, to help the EY sector with their current challenges. In order to determine whether it is feasible, additional headroom modelling needs to be completed when the DfE provides their allocations.

### **Schools Block Funding Update 2023/24**

- The basic structure of the National Funding Formula (NFF) remains unchanged for 2023/24
- Key changes to the schools NFF in 2023 to 2024 are:
  - rolling the 2022 to 2023 schools supplementary grant into the NFF
  - 4.3% to free school meals at any time in the last 6 years (FSM6) and income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI).
  - 0.5% to the floor and the minimum per pupil levels (MPPL)
  - 0% on the premises factors, except for Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

## **Current Pressures on Schools Budgets**

- Teachers Pay Award update & NJC pay offer
- Energy prices
- Other cost pressures (catering/building materials, SLA inflationary Increases)

During the meeting, there was a discussion among the members about how there is no indication from the DfE as to how the funding will be implemented across the different sectors of the education system. It was acknowledged that LA is awaiting further announcements, expected mid-December. The funding announced refers only to the financial year 2023/24. There is no aid for schools to cope with the financial pressures they face at the moment. Teachers pay awards and NJC offer made budgeting difficult, as some had to be backdated to April 2022. It was an unforeseeable increase that schools could not predict in advance.

### **The working group:**

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Expressed any views about the Schools Block Budget for 2023/24**

### **3. De-delegation Update**

Members will be aware that the School Forum held two meetings on the formal voting for de-delegations.

On 18 October 2022, Primary and Secondary sectors agreed to;

- de-delegate Staff costs – Public Duties/Suspensions for primary schools in 2023/24, at 2022/23 levels.
- de-delegate the Heritage Learning Service for primary schools in 2023/24.
- de-delegate Schools in Financial Difficulty, for all schools in 2023/24.

There was no formal vote on School Improvement Function, further information was requested by the forum on what the offer provides. The meeting was held on 9 November 2022.

The School Forum voted on the School Improvement Function at the next meeting on 9 November 2022.

The decision was split between Primary and Secondary. The LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM arrangement states;

*"If there are an equal number of votes for and against a proposal, the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.*

*Individual members may ask that their vote contrary to the decision taken be formally recorded in the minutes"*

The Forum Chair, however, was not comfortable with a second or casting vote, especially since the Secondary was more inclined to say 'no' both in the consultation responses and in the poll during Team meetings.

The Schools operational Guidance 2023/24 was reviewed and it states;

*"Schools forum members for primary maintained schools and secondary maintained schools must decide separately for each phase whether the service should be provided centrally; the decision will apply to all maintained mainstream schools in that phase."*

It was agreed that the sectors decisions would remain separate, as per government operational guidance.

- The Primary sector agreed with School Improvement Function de-delegations
- The Secondary sector was against it

Members have expressed how there is a more detailed discussion between headteachers on this decision and how they did not support this service to be de-delegated for 2023 but did not vote on the School Portal.

The Chair of the School Forum has clarified how his decision was made based on the results of the school portal consultation.

It was discussed how not everyone accesses the school portal and if such significant decisions could be emailed to prompt headteachers. However, this would reduce the importance of the School Portal since people would rely more on emails. The headteachers should also share the information widely to promote more responses. For example, if the Diocese would like to share their views before the school forum votes, they could contact the school forum or the Chair for consideration at the meeting.

The decisions made are set, but further clarification is needed about the School Improvement Function (SIF). Members requested Aby Hardy, Head of Education Improvement, to provide more detail on how delegated funds would be spent and how they would benefit primary schools. It seems there is confusion about the statutory duties and trade duties that the service offers. Some members raised the possibility that Schools in Financial Difficulty (SIFD) might offer similar support. Furthermore, SIFD only provides financial support, while SIF provides leadership and overall education quality assistance.

#### **The working group:**

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Expressed views on the de-delegations decisions for 2023/24**
- c) Requested the School Improvement Function report be presented to School Forum on 12 January 2023.**

#### **4. School Teaching and Support Staff Supply Reimbursement Scheme**

Each year reports are presented to the Forum about the arrangements for the School Teaching and Support Staff Supply Reimbursement Scheme. This report sets out proposals for the 2023/24 Scheme changes for consideration.

#### **Outturn Position – 2021/22**

The Teacher element of the Supply Insurance Scheme had a surplus at the end of the financial year. In line with the Scheme Service Level Agreement, the Schools Forum agreed to increase the level of reserves to £1.5 million and reimburse the surplus to Scheme

members. Therefore, a total of £759,812 was reimbursed to members of the teacher aspect of the Scheme.

Reimbursements were calculated at a per-pupil rate using the NOR 2020 figures which were used for the Scheme Charges.

### **Scheme Arrangements – 2021/22**

The scheme arrangements agreed with the Forum looked to increase premiums to take account of the amended scheme operation, which included a provision to support some additional COVID-19 related absences. For example, self-isolation and the possible increase in the number of sickness absences increased the duration of absences.

Following the finalisation of the supply scheme arrangements with the Forum in January 2022, individual offers were issued to schools and academies for consideration. The tables below show the previous years take-up and the existing take-up. For reference, 33 fewer schools signed up for the scheme in 2022/23 than were involved in 2021/22.

#### **2021/22 Take up**

<b>Block</b>	Teaching support cover plus staff	Teaching support cover no staff	Support staff cover only	Total
Early Years Block	15	2	1	18
Schools Block	172	191	4	367
High Needs Block	26	5	0	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>416</b>

#### **2022/23 Take Up**

<b>Block</b>	Teaching support cover plus staff	Teaching support cover no staff	Support staff cover only	Total
Early Years Block	13	3	1	17
Schools Block	158	177	5	340
High Needs Block	22	3	1	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>383</b>

### **Scheme Proposals – 2023/24**

#### *Scheme Operation*

The operation of the scheme has been flexible in recent years to respond pandemic and subsequent high volume of claims. It is proposed that the existing scheme rules operating in 2022/23 should form the starting point for 2023/24, including:

- Processing amendments to allow claims to be reimbursed more efficiently, outlined in the 2023/24 Service Level Agreement.
- Continue to cover COVID-19 related absences

- Schools may be allowed to enter the scheme part-way through the financial year at the discretion of the Authority, although any existing absences or maternity leave starting within nine months will not be covered. Any pre-existing absences will be subject to the excess period chosen by the school. Schools entering the scheme part-way through the year will be charged at the full-year premium. In addition, there will be an administration fee of £50.

### *Scheme Premiums*

Scheme claims are submitted a month in arrears by schools, meaning that there is only a limited number of months available in the scheme monitoring since September 2022, but information on the end of November 2022 position will be shared with the working group at the meeting.

A 5% increase is currently forecast for teaching staff. It is usual practice to increase teaching and support staff premiums annually so that reimbursement rates can also increase in line with likely pay rises for the different categories of staff.

The Scheme reserve was held at an increased level at the end of the 2021/22 financial year as agreed by Forum, it is therefore judged that premiums from April 2023 should simply be increased by 5% for both the teaching staff and support staff elements, to match the forecast pay awards on the per pupil rate only. In addition, to reflect the surplus position at March 2022, the lump sum element of the Supply Scheme charges will not be increased and will remain at the same rate as the 2022/23 Scheme.

### *Reimbursement rates*

It is proposed that the reimbursement rates be increased by 5% for 2023/24 to mirror forecast pay awards, in line with the proposed increase in scheme premiums.

### **Options for Consideration**

Alternative options to consider could include:

- To increase by 5% on all elements excluding the lump sum
- or
- To increase by 5% on all elements, to protect reserves funding.

### **Service Offer to Schools**

Once scheme arrangements and charging/reimbursement rates are finalised by the Forum in January 2023, a formal individualised 2023/24 scheme offer will be issued to all schools and academies.

### **Update on processing claims**

Officers have received concerns from schools regarding the processing time of claims for the Supply Insurance Scheme. We have acknowledged that processing times are slower than we would hope.

In response, we will be transferring the processing of claims from Exchequer Services to the Schools Finance team. We are currently working on making this process more efficient. It is

anticipated these processes will begin from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 in line with the start of the 2023/24 Scheme. More information will be provided in due course.

As a result, members were pleased to see that claims are looking to be processed more efficiently and that the School Finance team would be better suited.

The working group was in the agreement with purpose changes for 2023/24, only a question was raised about whether COVID-related illnesses would still be covered under the scheme proposals for 2023/24. It was explained that it was still a sickness absence. Member asked whether maternity leave, adoption, and paternity were covered by the Scheme. It was explained that they are, and it was agreed to bring more information to the next meeting of the School Forum. **Appendix A, includes current policy where information can be found.**

Another member asked if future years' modelling could be presented on how reserves will be affected. Based on discussions with the officer, the Forum Chair has pointed out that 55% of income is being used this year. In the year following COVID, the number will return to normal. It has been agreed that future modelling can be looked at for school forum meetings.

The working group was asked to recommend options to the forum on 12 January 2023. A majority voted to increase all elements by 5% in order to protect reserves, with the agreement of purpose changes for 2023/24 with the existing scheme rules operating in 2022/23 and reimbursement rates increased by 5%. Other options, excluding lump sum, would potentially eat into the reserves.

Due to the fact that many special schools purchase this service, a high-needs block member requested that this report also be presented at their meeting, in future years.

#### **The working group:**

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Expressed views on the proposed arrangements and charges for the 2022/23 School Teaching and Support Staff Supply Reimbursement Scheme.**
- c) Recommended Scheme Proposals for 2023/24 to the school forum on 12 January 2023.**
- d) Recommended increasing all elements by 5% in order to protect reserves to the school forum on 12 January 2023.**

### **5. Ukraine Funding**

Information was requested at previous meetings about the support available in Lancashire for Ukrainian families arriving in Lancashire.

Schools were able to apply for funding by completing the form a link which was provided in the papers.

Schools have been provided with additional information about this support in the regular Education Bulletin. The Education Bulletin copy was provided to the working group.

For recent forms that were submitted, funding will become available in mid/late December. The refugee team still needs to confirm how much will be allocated. This will vary depending on the arrival date in the UK, but it should be received quarterly. The team will meet again

next week to decide how much money will be allocated, and further information will be brought to the next meeting at the School Forum.

Members have found that the deadline for completing these forms was short, and they requested that the feedback be passed back to the team.

**The working group:**

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Expressed any views about Ukraine Funding forms.**

## **6. Schools in Financial Difficulty**

Kirsty Lister was not available to provide a verbal update and it was expressed the need of having the Financial Officer at those meetings going forward.

It was explained to the working group that LA acknowledges that their financial pressures are increasing. As a result, Kirsty Lister held a workshop where additional advice could be given. A School Finance budget workshop was presented on 29 November and 6 December 2022 today, for members to attend. Workshop invitations were sent through the School Portal. It has been reported that some members will attend the second workshop.

**The working group:**

- a) Noted the information.**

## **7. Clawback Exemption Request**

In July 2022, the Forum considered the School Balances and Clawback Policy for 2022/23 and agreed that clawback should be reintroduced on excessive revenue balances at March 2023. A copy of the agreed policy is provided at Appendix A. to the report

The agreed policy is

### **School Balances and Clawback Guidance 2022/23**

**This guidance applies to school balances at 31 March 2023**

#### **Guideline Balances**

The Authority's current maximum guideline balance is:

- 12% of Consistent Financial reporting (CFR) income for all phases of maintained school (*It is suggested that the 12% guideline figure is not seen as a target*);
- A £75,000 minimum balance threshold will be applied.

*(This has been increased from £60,000 for 2022/23 taking into account inflation over the years since the last time that the minimum value was raised. This will provide smaller schools with a larger level of allowable balance as a protection against future costs pressures).*

## **Clawback of "excess balances"**

The Authority's clawback arrangements are:

- A clawback rate of 50% is to be applied to any balance above guideline in the first year a school exceeds the guideline (after adjusting for exemptions).

## **Clawback Exemption Requests 2022/23**

Following notification of the Forum's decision, the request has been received from a Lancashire primary school requesting an exception to the policy at March 2023.

### **Request (1)**

The primary school in question has saved funds in the past years towards providing a new learning space and before/after school club space on the school site.

Currently, they have more classes within the school and the space used over recent years is no longer available.

The original price of this was estimated to be £200,000 and therefore money was put aside for this project and the planning was to be submitted this term for a January-March installation date – all before the end of the financial year.

The school has saved £200,000 in this year's budget so they could purchase a modular unit to be used for their after-school club and an additional learning support space for Learning Mentors and parents/family courses.

Considering the long time, it has taken to submit prices for this, obtaining three quotes has taken much longer than usual. Due to increased materials and labour costs and the availability of these units, the current costs being quoted have exceeded the original estimation, which impacted their plans for this year and may be subject to clawback at the end of this year. The school in question is being currently quoted at £255,630 and asking for £200,000 to be exempt from clawback so the project could go ahead next year.

### **Request (2)**

In December 2021 the school in question was granted permission to extend its age range to make provision for pupils from age 4 – 16. The primary building assigned to School for this provision will be constructed at the Standen Estate and will become the first 'all-through' school in the local authority. The new primary site is due to be handed over to the school on 18th August 2023 in readiness for the admission of the first reception class in September 2023.

This school is successful for some considerable time and was assessed as being 'Good' with outstanding features at the most recent Ofsted inspection (February 2020). At the heart of both the school's success to date and its future plans is a clear and coherent focus on reading.

## **Proposed Build Activity**

The school was originally built in 1932 and although there have been many modifications since then, the basic design still largely reflects the building's age. The 'all-through' school will create new challenges but they are convinced that, building on our existing successes, a central focus on reading throughout the curriculum will be essential in creating the best provision for every pupil right through the school from Reception to Year 11. The current Learning Resources facility is old-fashioned, dysfunctional and inefficient and they are now seeking to completely redesign and rebuild this area such that it is efficient, inclusive and inspirational. This is a major remodelling project that will completely open the area up and provide a more modern and productive working environment for pupils right across the whole school spectrum, including the school's most vulnerable pupils. The refurbished LRC will comprise a learning support suite as well as reading, ICT, careers and teaching areas and a Languages Café. It is our belief that this change will be central to the school's improvement journey, its provision of an outstanding curriculum offer and therefore the future success of the all-through school.

The project is set to commence as soon as possible, in the new year. The designs are in the process of being finalised and contractors are being tendered for by their architects. The timeline of the project will vary, as the project will need to be worked around pupil activity in the school, but it is estimated to be around six to seven months, hence the need to carry forward the project funding into the new financial year.

As a consequence of this, this school have sought to increase their planned Revenue Reserves holding and may breach the 'clawback' threshold at 31 March 2023. It is also possible that some element of the costs associated with this project will be invoiced or legitimately accrued (thereby avoiding clawback) but this is uncertain right now.

The current construction cost estimated for the school is £486K.

The following items are excluded from the construction cost estimate and are outside the scope of the project:

- Canopy
- Fixtures, fittings, furniture, furnishings, loose fittings
- IT equipment and systems
- Upgrading electrical incoming service supply if required
- Service connections
- Professional fees
- Planning and Building Regulation Fees
- Inflation beyond the second quarter of 2023
- VAT

They anticipate the overall final costs associated with this project to exceed £500K. Although the secondary school requests for £500K to be exempt from clawback so the project could go ahead next year.

In order to support clawback exemptions at 31 March 2023, it was asked if the working group affirmatively support both requests. There was unanimous agreement among the members to recommend both to the School Forum meeting held on 12 January 2023.

**The working group:**

**a) Noted the report.**

**b) Supported clawback exemptions for 2022/23 to be taken as recommendations to the School Forum meeting.**

# SUPPLY COVER INSURANCE AND MATERNITY SCHEME FOR LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS 2022/23

## **SUPPLY COVER INSURANCE AND MATERNITY SCHEME FOR LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS 2022/23**

### **Incorporating:**

- **Supply Cover Insurance Scheme for Teaching Staff**
- **Support Staff Sickness and Maternity Insurance Scheme**

### **Introduction**

From 2013/14, the previously separate Supply Cover Insurance Scheme for Teaching Staff and the Support Staff (Non-Teaching) Staff Sickness and Maternity Insurance Scheme were merged together for administrative purposes. Both schemes retain their existing separate operating methodologies and schools still have the option to pick from a menu of services for teaching staff supply and/or support staff supply.

### **Changes for 2022/23**

The operation of the scheme has been flexible in recent years to respond to changes in general government advice on the pandemic, and the scheme will continue to react to any update government guidance throughout 2022/23. However, it is proposed that the scheme rules operating in 2021/22 will form the starting point for 2022/23, including:

- Self-isolation. Staff who are self isolating due to COVID-19 symptoms or as a result of test and trace will continue to be covered by the scheme, where the school is incurring additional costs by covering the absence as if staff were off ill, and subject to the normal scheme rules, for example, the waiting periods chosen by the school and subject to the school remaining open and scheme reimbursement rates.
- In year changes to the level of cover provided will remain suspended in 2022/23 so that the scheme reserve can be protected in order to cope with the demands caused by the pandemic.
- Ongoing government guidance for workers who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) is that that they no longer needed to shield. Staff in Lancashire schools can return to work as long as the workplace is COVID secure and supply cover is not therefore supported by the scheme in 2022/23. However, the scheme will respond to any specific guidance or in year changes to government/LCC Schools HR advice in respect of Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) staff.
- No other changes are proposed to the Scheme SLA.

Scheme Premiums and reimbursement rates will be increased by 3% from April 2022, to reflect the latest estimate of staff pay increases and continuing COVID support.

## **Principle of the Scheme**

The principle of the supply cover scheme is to protect schools against significant financial loss due to the incidence of sickness absence and maternity amongst teaching and support staff by spreading the cost of absences between participating schools.

The scheme is self-financing through payments of premiums by schools, with premiums being reviewed annually in line with forecast costs, thus the scheme is only viable if the majority of schools “buy in” to enable the overall risk to be spread on a sufficiently wide basis.

The Authority reserves the right to withdraw the offer of participation in the scheme from all schools and to withdraw the scheme entirely if insufficient schools buy into the scheme to make it financially viable.

## Minimum Period of Membership

The scheme year runs from April to March each year and cover is provided on a full year basis only. Membership of the Scheme will be continuous, but schools will have the opportunity to review and amend the level of cover taken or withdraw from the scheme at each annual renewal. Confirmation of cover will be issued prior to commencement. In year withdrawal is not permitted other than on closure of the school.

Schools would normally be allowed to enter the scheme part way through the financial year at the discretion of the Authority/Schools Forum, subject to certain rules and an administrative charge, however, due to the increased uncertainty surrounding the scheme from April 2022, this option has been suspended for 2022/23.

## Premiums Payable

The premiums will be adjusted annually in line with forecast costs of reimbursement to schools with effect from 1 April each year. Premiums will also need to be adjusted to ensure that at County level the total premiums received, and payments made remains in balance in the light of the actual claims experience.

The Authority maintains a reserve in order to ensure that claims can be met. Members will receive reimbursement of any scheme surplus above the agreed reserve level after the closure of accounts.

For 2022/23, increases in premiums have been necessary to reflect the latest estimate of staff pay increases and continuing COVID support.

## Teaching Staff Scheme

Schools are given the option to purchase cover for teaching staff absences in excess of 3, 5 and 10 working days.

The charging structure is split into two blocks, one for pupil led charges (nursery, primary and secondary schools), and the other where a place based charge is used (special schools and PRUs).

Charging is based on a per pupil/place basis. Details are provided below:

*Pupil Funded Schools (Primary, Secondary, Academy, and Nursery Schools)*

The per pupil rates for 2022/23 are:

<b>10 Day Premium</b>	<b>5 Day Premium</b>	<b>3 Day Premium</b>
£45.52 per pupil	£53.69 per pupil	£58.76 per pupil

*Minimum Charge for Pupil Funded Schools*



The Scheme includes a minimum level of premium in the pupil funded teacher element of the scheme, to reflect that all schools, even those with very few pupils on roll, will have a basic staffing requirement;

The 2022/23 minimum charges are set out below:

<b>10 Day Premium</b>	<b>5 Day Premium</b>	<b>3 Day Premium</b>
£1,861 minimum charge	£2,183 minimum charge	£2,385 minimum charge

*Place Funded Schools (Special Schools and PRUs)*

The 2022/23 premiums are set out below:

<b>10 Day Premium</b>	<b>5 Day Premium</b>	<b>3 Day Premium</b>
£135.05 per place	£158.28 per place	£173.27 per place

### **Reimbursement Rates**

The reimbursement rates will be increased by 3% compared to 2021/22, to reflect the latest estimate of teaching staff pay increases. See Appendix B.

## **Support Staff Scheme**

Schools are given the option to purchase cover for support staff absences in excess of 10 working days.

The Support Staff Premiums for 2022/23 are set out below:

*Pupil Funded Schools (Primary, Secondary, Academy, and Nursery Schools):*

- Lump sum of £2,000 plus
- £15.07 per pupil

*Place Funded Schools (Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units):*

- Lump sum of £2,453 plus
- £61.30 per place

## **Reimbursement Rates**

For the support staff scheme, reimbursements are aligned to estimated actual grades of staff in the School Financial Services Budget Preparation Guidance. This will recognise the latest estimate of support staff pay increases for 2022/23 at circa 3%. See Appendix B.

## Claims Procedure

Claim forms are available via the schools portal forms area, using the link below.

[https://schoolsportal.lancsngfl.ac.uk/view\\_sp.asp?siteid=3327&pageid=8945&e=e#anchor218340](https://schoolsportal.lancsngfl.ac.uk/view_sp.asp?siteid=3327&pageid=8945&e=e#anchor218340)

Completed forms should be emailed to: [supplyclaims@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:supplyclaims@lancashire.gov.uk)

Sickness claims should be made on a timely basis. In practice this should usually be within one month of any absence and monthly for a continuing absence. Maternity claims for teachers should be submitted after a maximum of 90 working days (including inset days) or earlier if the post holder returns to work. Support Staff maternity claims are paid as a single lump sum at the commencement of maternity leave.

<b>Claim Type / Claim Timing</b>	<b>Teaching Scheme</b>		<b>Support Staff</b>	
Sickness	ST2	Monthly	LTS1	Monthly
Maternity/Adoption	ST3	After a maximum of 90 working days (inch inset days)	NTM	Commencement of leave
Shared Parental Leave	Email for advice		Email for advice	

Schools joining the scheme at the start of the scheme year will be able to claim for existing sickness absences. Claims cannot be back dated and will be subject to the relevant waiting period (3, 5, 10 working days). Claims are paid in arrears. Schools joining the scheme mid-year cannot claim for existing or known future absences. See FAQ's for further details.

## Eligibility and Entitlement

The eligibility and entitlement for each category of qualifying absence is described at Appendix A.

## **Claim Expiry**

Claims must be submitted in line with the requirements notified to schools for the year-end closure procedures.

**Any claims received after the notified deadline will not be payable.**

In practice this is likely to be early March 2022 for claims up to February 2022.

Claims for March 2022 need to be submitted by **31 May 2022** and will be paid in 2022/23. Claims relating to the 2022/23 scheme submitted after the deadline of 31 May 2022 will not be payable.

## **Payment of Premiums**

Academy/Bank account schools invoices will be issued in the Summer Term. Standard terms are payment within 30 days. To pay in agreed instalments or to set up a direct debit arrangement please email [corporatedmt@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:corporatedmt@lancashire.gov.uk) .

All other schools: premiums will be collected by journal transfer in the Summer Term

## **Arbiter**

In the event of any dispute, the Authority will be the final arbiter in order to ensure consistency of approach across all schools. Any appeals will be presented to the Head of Service, Financial Management (Development and Schools) for consideration.

## **Contact Details**

Contact Email Address [supplyclaims@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:supplyclaims@lancashire.gov.uk)

### 1. Teaching Staff Sickness Absence

#### a. Nature of Cover

The purpose of the scheme is to offset the costs incurred of employing a supply teacher to cover a teacher absent for medical reasons, with consequent duplication of salary payment.

#### b. Eligible Days

A claim will be met under the scheme according to the number of working days absent from and including either day 4, 6 or 11 in a continuous block of absence of an individual teacher. (Schools are given the option of purchasing cover for teaching staff absences in excess of 3, 5 and 10 working days). For this purpose, working days are defined as days Monday to Friday when the school is in session, including teacher training days, but excluding weekends and school holidays.

#### c. Entitlement Basis

Reimbursement rates will be determined and published at the beginning of the financial year and will be adjusted annually, as agreed by the Lancashire Schools Forum. In the case of long term sickness absences the reimbursement rate will be reduced to reflect the fact that the teacher is no longer entitled to full pay. Payments will also cease when the teacher is no longer entitled to occupational sick pay. Schools joining the scheme at the start of the scheme year will be able to claim for existing absences. Claims cannot be back dated and will be subject to the waiting period (3, 5, 10 working days).

The current reimbursement rates can be found at *Appendix B*.

Reimbursement will be made on this basis regardless of whether or not a supply teacher is appointed, and the actual pay of any teacher appointed.

#### d. Acting Allowances

Reimbursement will be limited to the specified rate published. However, where a teacher on the leadership scale is absent long term the school may pay an acting allowance to another member of the permanent staff, in addition to bearing the cost of daily supply cover or may make a temporary appointment on the leadership scale. In these circumstances the Scheme will cover the payment of one acting allowance for the absence of any teacher on the leadership scale only.

## 2. Teaching Staff Maternity/Adoption/Shared Parental Leave and Paternity

### a. Teaching Staff Maternity/Adoption/Shared Parental Leave

- **Nature of the Cover**

The purpose of the scheme is to compensate schools against the costs of a teacher taking maternity, adoption or shared parental leave (SPL).

- **Eligible Days**

Reimbursements are only payable for a maximum of 18 weeks (90 weekdays) calculated from the Monday after the mother's first day of absence. The last day of absence should be either the end of the maternity/adoption pay period (a maximum of 90 working days including Inset days) or earlier if the post holder returns to work prior to the end of this period. SPL arrangements can be included in claims for reimbursement subject to the 90 working day time limit. School holidays, bank holidays and unpaid leave within the 18 week eligibility period cannot be claimed and will reduce the amount payable.

- **Entitlement Basis**

The reimbursement will be calculated based on the number of working days absent (up to a 90 day maximum) multiplied by the appropriate daily reimbursement rate. It should be noted that supply cover for maternity is funded at 33% of the full rate to reflect the savings made by the school on the salary of the teacher taking maternity/adoption leave. Claims for part-time teachers may be made at the appropriate part-time fraction of the daily reimbursement.

The current reimbursement rates can be found at *Appendix B*.

- **Acting Allowances**

Reimbursement will be limited to the specified rate published, however, where a teacher on the leadership scale is absent on maternity/adoption/SPL the school may pay an acting allowance to another member of the permanent staff, in addition to bearing the cost of daily supply cover or may make a temporary appointment on the leadership scale. In this circumstance the Scheme will cover the payment of one acting allowance for the absence of any teacher on the leadership scale for a maximum of 90 working days / 18 weeks calculated from the Monday after the mother's first day of absence.

Details of Shared Parental Leave arrangements are available via the HR area on the Schools Portal:

<https://schoolsportal.lancsngfl.ac.uk/corporate/web/viewdoc.asp?id=120103>

## **b. Paternity Leave**

The scheme will cover absences for Paternity Leave. Claims may be made for up to two weeks for qualifying employees. For teaching staff this will be paid at the same rate that is available for Maternity Leave.

Details of Paternity Leave arrangements are available via the HR area on the Schools Portal:

[https://schoolsportal.lancsngfl.ac.uk/view\\_sp.asp?siteid=4311&pageid=47566&e=e](https://schoolsportal.lancsngfl.ac.uk/view_sp.asp?siteid=4311&pageid=47566&e=e)

### 3. Support Staff Eligibility and Entitlement

The following cover will be provided for schools where support staff sickness absences are:

- Over 10 working days and the school is incurring additional costs by covering the absence,

Schools joining the scheme at the start of the scheme year will be able to claim for existing absences. Claims cannot be back dated and will be subject to the waiting period (10 working days).

- For Maternity Leave a flat rate of £872.00 (pro-rata 37 hours) will be given for each maternity.
- For Paternity Leave staff a flat rate of £48.44 per week (pro rata 37 hours) will be paid for each Paternity, up to a maximum of two weeks. This is equivalent to the rate payable in the support staff Maternity Scheme.

Details of Paternity Leave arrangements are available via the HR area on the Schools Portal:

[https://schoolportal.lancsngfl.ac.uk/view\\_sp.asp?siteid=4311&pageid=47566&e=e](https://schoolportal.lancsngfl.ac.uk/view_sp.asp?siteid=4311&pageid=47566&e=e)

- For Shared Parental Leave a flat rate of £48.44 per week (pro rata 37 hours) will be paid for each maternity, up to a maximum of sixteen qualifying weeks. This is equivalent to the rate payable in the support staff Maternity Scheme.

Details of Shared Parental Leave arrangements are available via the HR area on the Schools Portal:

<https://schoolportal.lancsngfl.ac.uk/corporate/web/viewdoc.asp?id=120103>

- The scheme applies to all staff employed directly by the school for the purposes of their core schools budget funded activity. (Therefore staff working at the school for a third party, for example a contractor providing catering or cleaning services, are excluded; as are staff employed to undertake extended services activities).

Reimbursement rates for 2022/23 are provided at *Appendix B*.

**Teaching Staff Supply Reimbursement Rates  
1 April 2022- 31 March 2023**

**Primary, Secondary, Academy, Nursery and Short Stay Schools**

Full Day	£181.18
Morning	£108.69
Afternoon	£72.46
Half Pay	£90.59
Maternity/Adoption/Paternity/SPL	£60.38

**Special School / Academy**

Full Day	£203.10
Morning	£121.87
Afternoon	£81.24
Half Pay	£101.55
Maternity/Adoption/Paternity/SPL	£67.70

Reimbursement Rates for Support Staff are on the next page.

## Support Staff Supply Reimbursement Rates

1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023

Category of Staff	Reimbursement Rate Per hour £
<b>Teaching Assistants</b>	
Teaching Assistants Level 1 (LCC Grade 3 to SCP 4)	£12.53
Teaching Assistants Level 2a (LCC Grade 4 to SCP 6)	£13.07
Teaching Assistants Level 2b (LCC Grade 5 to SCP 11)	£14.06
Teaching Assistants Level 3 (LCC Grade 6 to SCP 19)	£15.95
Higher Level Teaching Assistants (LCC Grade 7 to SCP 25)	£18.88
<b>Administrative Staff</b> (This section can also be used for Learning Mentors, Library Staff and Technicians. Please select appropriate band for grade and add note on claim form)	
Business Support 1 and 2 (LCC Grade 3-4 to SCP 6)	£13.12
Business Support 3 and 4 (LCC Grade 5-6 to SCP 19)	£15.07
Business Support 5 and Business Manager 1-2 (LCC Grade 7-9 to SCP 35)	£22.34
Business Manager 3 - 5 (LCC Grade 10-12 to SCP 48)	£31.45
<b>Premises Staff</b>	
Cleaner (LCC Grade 1 SCP 1)	£12.38
Site Supervisor 1, 2b and 2a (LCC Grade 2-4 to SCP 6)	£12.81
Site Supervisor 3 and Site Manager (LCC Grade 5-6 to SCP 19)	£14.56
<b>Catering Staff</b>	
Catering 1 (LCC Grade 1 to SCP 1)	£12.30
Catering 2-4 (LCC Grade 2-4 to SCP 6)	£12.74
Catering 5-6 (LCC Grade 5-6 to SCP 19)	£14.78
<b>Midday Supervision</b>	
Welfare Assistants	£12.22
Midday Supervisors	£12.52

<b>Support Staff Maternity/Adoption/SPL/Paternity Rates</b> 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022	
Category of Staff	Reimbursement Rate
All Maternity/Adoption	Flat Rate of £854.76 (Pro Rata 37 hours)
All Paternity/SPL	£47.50 per week (Pro Rata 37 hours) – Paternity: maximum 2 weeks SPL: maximum 16 weeks

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q How does the renewal process work?**

**A** Schools will have the opportunity to review and amend the level of cover taken at each renewal. The scheme year runs from April to March each year and cover is provided on a full year basis only. In January each year schools will receive an offer letter via the Schools' Portal detailing the scheme arrangements and prices for the following year. Cover will be continuous unless schools notify a change in requirements. Prior to the start of the scheme year confirmation letters will be issued to each school detailing the level of cover taken and there will be a final opportunity to review and amend the level of cover. Cover must be agreed by 31 March each year for existing absences to be covered in the following financial year.

**Q Are existing absences covered?**

**A** Schools joining the scheme at the start of the scheme year will be able to claim for existing sickness absences. Claims cannot be back dated and will be subject to the relevant waiting period (3, 5, 10 working days).

Staff absence claims from existing scheme members for absences in March which continue into the new scheme year in April will only have the waiting period applied once for each absence and will therefore not be reapplied in April.

The current reimbursement rates can be found at *Appendix B*.

**Q. Can a school join the scheme once the new financial year has started?**

**A.** Not in 2022/23.

Schools would normally be allowed to enter the scheme part way through the financial year at the discretion of the Authority/Schools Forum, subject to certain rules and an administrative charge, however, due to the increased uncertainty surrounding the scheme from April 2022, this option has been suspended for 2022/23.

**Q My school has joined the scheme during the year but when I download the template from the system the form is telling me that we are not on the scheme?**

**A** Please can schools always ensure that they download the latest template from the Schools Portal as these will be regularly updated so there should only be minimal delays between changes occurring and the template being updated. In the event that the template on the portal is not up to date please contact [supplyclaims@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:supplyclaims@lancashire.gov.uk) for assistance.

**Q Can the annual invoice be paid in instalments?**

**A** Schools operating their own bank account will be invoiced in the summer term, but the option is available for the bill to be paid in instalments, rather than a single annual payment. Schools interested in paying in agreed instalments or to set up a direct debit arrangement are asked to contact:  
[corporatedmt@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:corporatedmt@lancashire.gov.uk)

Charges for schools banking with the County Council will be processed by journal transfer in the summer term.

**Q. Can I claim if a member of the teaching staff has to attend jury service?**

**A.** Yes, but from 2014/15, the public duties element of the teaching scheme has been included as part of the "Staff Costs" De-delegation, that was agreed by the Schools Forum. This means that cover for public duties is available to all schools, except Academies, regardless of whether they buy into this traded supply cover scheme.

Public duties include:

- Magistrates/Justices of the Peace;
- Jury Service;
- Attendance at Court/Tribunal as a Witness;
- Teachers who are Governors of schools other than their own;
- Territorial Army/Royal Naval Reserve/Royal Air Force Reserve.

Claim forms ST4 and ST6 are available via the finance section of the Schools Portal forms area, using the link below

[https://schoolsportal.lancsngfl.ac.uk/view\\_sp.asp?siteid=3327&pageid=8945&e=e#anchor218340](https://schoolsportal.lancsngfl.ac.uk/view_sp.asp?siteid=3327&pageid=8945&e=e#anchor218340)

**Q. What kinds of absences are not covered by the Supply Cover Insurance and Maternity Scheme for Lancashire Schools?**

**A.** The scheme covers sickness, maternity, adoption and paternity absences. Personal and professional absences are not covered, including:

- Special Leave;
- Elective Surgery e.g. cosmetic procedures that are a personal choice but not medically necessary;
- Time off for Dependents;
- Study Leave.

**Q. Is absence relating to IVF treatment covered by the Supply Cover Insurance and Maternity Scheme for Lancashire Schools?**

- A.** Hospital and GP appointments for IVF would be treated as any other medical appointment – reasonable time off etc. Sickness absence would apply to in-patient treatment and medically recommended rest.

Should a school have concerns regarding the length of any subsequent period of sickness absence following medical treatment they are advised to contact Occupational Health Unit who will advise on any likely recovery period and expected length of absence from work, which may differ from the former.

**Q What is Shared Parental Leave?**

- A** Where their baby is due or adopted on or after 5 April 2015, eligible mothers will be able to volunteer to end their maternity/adoption leave and/or pay early to create leave and pay which they can share with the child's father or their partner as shared parental leave and pay.

Shared parental leave means that eligible fathers and partners will be able to request more leave from work in the first year following their child's birth or adoption. Because it is shareable, there will also be cases where eligible mothers will return to work early because the child's father or their partner is taking leave in their place. Shared parental leave can be taken in discontinuous blocks. This means that eligible parents will also be able to request to mix work with leave in the first year of their child's life and return to work between periods of leave if they wish.

A mother can't return to work before the end of the compulsory 2 weeks of maternity leave following the birth.

Further information is available at :

<https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/overview>

and

<https://schoolportal.lancsngfl.ac.uk/corporate/web/viewdoc.asp?id=120103>

The scheme has been updated to reflect the introduction of SPL arrangements.

**Q. Can Adoption leave be claimed on the scheme?**

- A.** Adoption leave is claimable on the scheme for absences agreed in accordance with the LCC policy. The rules around the County Council's adoption leave policy are available from the link below:

[https://schoolportal.lancsngfl.ac.uk/view\\_sp.asp?siteid=4311&pageid=19058&e=e](https://schoolportal.lancsngfl.ac.uk/view_sp.asp?siteid=4311&pageid=19058&e=e)

**Q. When should a Maternity, Adoption or Shared Parental Leave claim be submitted?**

- A.** For the teaching scheme claims should be submitted after a maximum of 90 working days (including inset days) or earlier if the post holder returns to work

prior to the end of this period. For the support staff scheme where a lump sum payment is offered this should be claimed at the commencement of the maternity leave. Failure to submit claims within the appropriate time scale may result in non-payment.

**Q. How long after an absence can a claim be submitted?**

**A.** Claims should be made on a timely basis. In practice this should usually be within one month of any absence and monthly for a continuing absence. Claims for both the teaching and support staff must be received by the **31 May** immediately following the scheme year to which they relate.

**Any claims received after this date will not be payable.**

**Q. What happens if a member of staff is off long term and begins to receive half pay?**

**A.** The reimbursements rates would be reduced in recognition that a member of staff was now receiving half pay. There is provision on the claim forms to tell us the dates when pay reductions become effective.

**Q. What happens if a member of staff who has been absent returns to work on a phased basis?**

The County Council's Long Term Sickness Absence Procedure for Staff in Delegated Schools (August 2019) indicates that

"If a school is part of the County Council's Insurance Scheme for supply cover, the phased return must be arranged in agreement with Schools' HR Team, and in consideration of the advice from the OHU and/or the employee's medical adviser"

Once agreement on a phased return has been reached, schools are asked to include information in the comments box on the claim form detailing the arrangement. A manual adjustment will then be made to the claim to ensure the school is provided with the appropriate reimbursement.

**Q. How does the recovery of Insurance from 3<sup>rd</sup> Parties affect supply claim payments?**

**A.** The County Council's Long Term Sickness Absence Procedure for Staff in Delegated Schools (August 2019) indicates that:

If an absence is attributable to the negligence of a third party in respect of which damages are recoverable, the employee should inform the employer.

In such circumstances schools should ensure where a claim against the third party results in the recovery of costs incurred by the school which includes supply costs or equivalent any supply claims already made against the scheme are refunded to the scheme from the damages recovered. Please contact us for more details.

- Q. How to complete a claim for a colleague who is part time**
- A.** Contracted hours/sessions are averaged across the month rather than the working pattern of the member of staff. The forms will calculate the claimable hours or sessions
- Q. How to complete a claims form when the excess waiting days roll into the next month**
- A.** Complete both forms as normal and submit them together. Any excess waiting days will then be adjusted when processing
- Q. If I need help to complete a claim form or have a query about an existing claim, who do I contact?**
- A.** Claim forms are available via the schools portal forms area, using the link below.
- [https://schoolportal.lancsngfl.ac.uk/view\\_sp.asp?siteid=3327&pageid=8945&e=e#anchor218340](https://schoolportal.lancsngfl.ac.uk/view_sp.asp?siteid=3327&pageid=8945&e=e#anchor218340)

For queries please contact: [supplyclaims@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:supplyclaims@lancashire.gov.uk)